

Pocatello's Federal Courthouses



Pocatello's first federal courthouse, 1916.
(National Archives)

The search for a dedicated federal courthouse building in Pocatello began in 1908. The following year, a lot at West Lewis and Arthur Streets was purchased for the building. Four years later Congress appropriated \$50,000 to begin the \$200,000 construction project.

Construction of the three-story, Classical-style building took a little more than two years, beginning in 1914. Local newspapers referred to the building as “the palace” and hoped that it would be used for 200 years. U.S. District Court Judge Frank Dietrich convened court in the second floor courtroom on April 10, 1916. The old courthouse was used until 1977.

Twenty years later, planning was underway for a new federal courthouse—a traditional-style two-story brick building with columns. The new structure covered approximately 30,000 square feet, providing offices for the U.S. Marshal, U.S. Attorney, Federal Defender, and General Services Administration (GSA) in addition to the courts.

When the new courthouse opened in March of 1999 it was considered one of the most user-friendly, highly automated, and secure federal judicial facilities in the U.S. It was also the first federal courthouse in the U.S. with a private donor art collection. The collection includes painting by Idaho and nationally recognized artists.

In 2011, an exact replica of the Philadelphia Liberty Bell was moved from Brady Park to the front of the federal building after many years of planning by the U.S. Courts, the Pocatello Masons, and other groups.



1999 Pocatello federal courthouse.
(U.S. Courts)



**Dayton Claudio art work,
Pocatello federal courthouse.**
(Pocatello Arts Council)

Sources:

“Pocatello Courthouse Dedication Ceremony (June 4, 1999) Historical Perspective,” Judge B. Lynn Winmill.

U.S. District & Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Idaho 1999 Annual Report Summary. www.id.uscourts.gov/docs/cbannual.pdf

Links:

Federal Judicial Center History of the Federal Judiciary:
www.fjc.gov/history/courthouses.nsf

Pocatello Historic Downtown Walking Tour:
www.pocatello.us/pds/documents/hpc/old_town_walk.pdf

Pocatello Arts Council: www.pocatelloarts.org/projects/courthouse.shtml



**Pocatello
Liberty Bell replica.**